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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Herkimer County Community College to determine whether a 40-hour work study experience affected the work attitudes of secretarial science students. The study population consisted of a group of June 1984 secretarial science degree candidates who had not yet participated in the work study program, and a group of 1982 and 1983 program graduates who had completed the cooperative education experience. A questionnaire was mailed to both groups to discern attitudes regarding employer-employee relationships; working conditions; employee aspirations, responsibility, welfare, social sensitivity, interpersonal relationships, and initiative; and ethical relationships. Based on responses from 60% of the students surveyed, study findings revealed that following the work study experience there seemed to be significant improvements in the areas of "working well with supervisors regardless of their personalities and ages," "accepting constructive criticism from supervisors and fellow employees," "dependable to follow a job through to its completion," "making decisions on your own," "dressing properly," "being concerned about the welfare of other employees," "avoid being self-centered," "tactfulness," "getting along with fellow employees," "accepting inexperienced workers," and "going ahead with a task without being told to do so." The study report includes a literature review and the questionnaire. (HB)

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE IS AN IMPROVEMENT IN ATTITUDE IN STUDENTS INVOLVED IN COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A Paper Presented To
Dr. Jeanann Boyce
Department of Vocational-Technical Education
at SUNY Oswego

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for A Master's Degree in
Vocational-Technical Education

- by -

Donna M. Testa

May 1984

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE IS AN IMPROVEMENT IN ATTITUDE IN STUDENTS INVOLVED IN COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS---By Donna M. Testa

A research study was proposed to evaluate attitude change in students who had the opportunity to be involved in cooperative education programs. A Descriptive study was done in the area of Secretarial Science, and a purpose statement was, therefore, given as "To determine whether there is an improvement in attitudes in students involved in cooperative education programs."

The population for this study consisted of Secretarial Science degree and certificate students from Herkimer County Community College. These students were selected from each emphasis in this curriculum--Medical, Legal, Executive, Word Processing, and Medical Office Assistants. The group of June, 1984, degree candidates, who had not yet participated in the secretarial work study program, were considered the before group. The 1982 and 1983 graduates with a degree in this area, who had completed the work study program, were considered the after group. Each one of the students in this population were surveyed, and a response of over 60% was received. A work study evaluation questionnaire was developed using the Likert

technique for the construction of attitude measuring. The survey was given to the before group in December, 1983, and it was mailed out to the after group in February, 1984. A total of thirty-two variables were listed on the survey questionnaire. The following categories of questions were used:

1. Employer-Employee Relationships
2. Working Conditions
3. Employee Aspirations
4. Employee Responsibility
5. Employee Welfare
6. Ethical Relationships
7. Employee Social Sensitivity
8. Employee Interpersonal Relationships
9. Initiative

After the completed surveys were received, the data was analyzed using hypotheses testing. A statistical analysis was completed with a significance of .05.

This study was both statistically and educationally significant. The analysis was strongly significant as it indicated that out of thirty-two variables, only eight did not show an improvement in attitude. Many of the variables that did show an improvement had a significant improvement. A table was included in the findings of this study to provide visual support of data collection. A one-tailed, two-sample T-test was completed, and the findings table displayed the following information:

A listing of each variable

The before mean

The after mean

The before standard deviation

The after standard deviation

The T-score

The study was educationally significant as it provided support to the belief that participation in cooperative education programs provides an atmosphere where an improvement in attitude can occur. It can be concluded, as a result of this study, that educators are being successful with the attitudinal objectives of this work study program. It was recommended that further studies be undertaken to try to determine if different emphasis of study in this same curriculum have an effect on this improvement in attitude. Another study could be conducted, also, on the same before and after group of students. It was not possible in this study because of the time frame allowed. However, it may be worthwhile to use the same group before they participate in the work study and after they have concluded it.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We have an ever-changing society in the United States today. The recent innovations in technology, economic growth, and new demands that these changes have required have made the world of work much different for prospective employees. The goal of education has always been to help the students become confident about their skills and abilities and ready to meet these demands. Schools, colleges, and universities are now using cooperative education work experience as part of their curriculums. The main purpose of this is to allow students to actually participate in the working world in an area of interest to them while attending classes related to that profession. This gives students experience as employees of business and industry before their actual professional employment. The cooperating employer provides an atmosphere where the students are able to put to use skills and occupational abilities learned in the classroom. At the same time, these students are provided with an environment where they are able to have "hands-on" experience with the newest equipment in technology. Cooperative education programs can provide students with skills, knowledges, and attitudes not available in the classroom.

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is an improvement in attitudes in students involved in cooperative education programs.

THE PROBLEM

While the cooperative education may provide a learning experience where occupational skills are provided, it has never been clear just what type of attitude improvement is gained by student involvement in a program of this type. It has been determined that attitude can have more of an effect on success in the business world than aptitude. The questions remain, however, just what is a successful attitude and what conditions provide an atmosphere where an improvement in attitude is actually developed? Educators involved in cooperative education have believed that they are providing this environment through their working relationship with cooperating employers. A goal of this program has been to provide students with an opportunity to adjust to employment while developing positive behaviors and attitudes of self-confidence and interpersonal relationship skills. These positive attitudinal skills may enhance students' success in developing personal characteristics rated highly by today's employer.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study was proposed because of the difficulty in determining whether there is an improvement in attitude in

students involved in cooperative education programs. It has been generally believed by educators that the goal of this attitude improvement is being met by programs of this type. Research, however, has indicated no clear proof that this is true. The problem exists that perhaps classroom instruction may be just as effective or more effective in behavior and attitude development. If this is so, cooperative education work experience is failing to meet a very important part of its overall goal in education and should be reevaluated in terms of effectiveness in the educational process.

This researcher has been a partner with a community college and area businesses and industry in a cooperating work experience with secretarial science curriculum students. The students complete a forty-hour, unpaid work experience in the Spring of their graduating year. It has long been felt by all involved that this was definitely a worthwhile program in relation to the goals and objectives of this particular curriculum. After reviewing recent research and literature in this area, some serious doubts have arisen as to the achievements of this educational experience. Therefore, the hypothesis for this study was: "There is no determination of an improvement in attitude in students involved in cooperative education programs."

VARIABLES

The variables of this study have been designed to ascertain the following:

1. The type of working relationship with the employer
2. The type of working conditions
3. Satisfaction with the area of interest of the student (medical, legal, executive, medical office assistant, word processing)
4. Willingness to accept responsibility
5. Interpersonal relationship skills
6. Traits of honesty, sensitivity, and initiative
7. Expectations for future employment

TECHNIQUE

A descriptive study was done, and a survey instrument was developed to determine if there is an actual change in attitude of Herkimer County Community College Secretarial Science students. These students surveyed will be either:

1. Students who graduated in June 1982 or 1983 and have completed the forty-hour work study program in the Spring semester of their senior year

or

2. Students entering their last semester who have not yet begun their involvement in this work study program

Every one of these students, in this population, was surveyed. This data was then analyzed using hypotheses testing.

CONCLUSION

It is more important than ever for educators to provide the students with career development opportunities to enable them to become happy, productive members of our society. Cooperative education programs have been considered an important tool in education to achieve this goal. It was,

therefore, important to conduct further research to determine if attitudinal improvement is actually taking place as a result of this student involvement.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Attitude. Posture, state of mind, or feeling

Behavior. The way one conducts one's self; to act or to function

Certificate. A program of study where students complete graduation requirements within one year

Competency. Specific tasks that a student must be able to complete to satisfy course requirements

Cooperating employer. A participating employer who agrees to provide the cooperative education

Cooperative education. A program of vocational education for persons who, through written cooperative arrangements between the school and employers, receive instruction, including required academic courses and related vocational instruction, by alternation of study in school with a job in any occupational field (Mason, Haines, Furtado, 1981)

Cooperative instructor. Guides and coordinates the cooperative education work experience between the student and employer

Curriculum. Group of related courses

Occupation. A means of making a living; a profession or a job

Occupational/Vocational education. Education which prepares students to do a job; any education up to and including a two-year post-secondary education

Post-secondary education. Any education after high school, which offers vocational education

Related classroom instruction. Instruction that aids and enhances the student in his/her cooperative work experience

Secondary education. High school including BOCES

Secretarial Science Students. Herkimer County Community College students majoring in Medical, Legal, Executive Secretarial, Medical Office Assistant, or Word Processing; a two-year AAS degree

Trait. Distinguishing feature or characteristic

Work study experience. See "cooperative education"

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION

Prospective employees need to learn job application skills, knowledges, and attitudes in order to be employed. Schools try to offer students the basic ingredients of self-worth: knowledge and thinking, and teachers can organize learning to stimulate problem solving. Cooperative educational programs can provide the environment in which teachers and students can work together with employers to prepare students to successfully enter the work force. Educational institutions have believed that education should assist each individual in becoming a productive and a responsible citizen. Mason, Haines and Furtado (1981) stated that there is also the belief in our society that schools are to help each person achieve his/her personal needs and form attitudes and behaviors which will enable him/her to become a happy, productive individual. If an educational institution wishes to use the work environment as a source of learning experiences, it should look closely at human needs and attitude, behavior development.

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Research studies have been done to try to determine what competencies should be stressed by teacher/coordinators involved in cooperative education programs. These studies have

tried to develop a background of information on competencies as they relate to attitudes, behaviors, and personal/productive traits.

In 1979, Reed conducted a study to identify teaching competencies of teacher-coordinators of cooperative office education and the importance of the competencies as perceived by teacher-coordinators of cooperative office education according to their backgrounds of experience and tenure. A survey was mailed to coordinators of cooperative education, and it was found that related classroom instruction should be designed to help the student see the relationship and understand how his/her job is related to what he/she is doing in the classroom. This close relationship of instruction/experience will reinforce the total learning experience.

Meggison (1980) studied the effectiveness of the secretarial science program at Massachusetts Bay Community College through a survey of the 1975 to 1979 graduates of the program to look at the results for possible curricular revision. A questionnaire and job-activity checklist were sent to graduates of the program. These findings showed that it is the duty of collegiate secretarial educators to develop "thinking" secretaries who are capable of making decisions and working effectively as a member of the management team.

In 1981, Montgomery did a study to determine the employment status of the 1975-79 secretarial science and office service certificate recipients and to obtain their opinions

on the effectiveness of the office training received at Chaffey Community College. A questionnaire was mailed to all students who earned a certificate during this five-year period. The recommendations were: work experience should continue to be a requirement for all the certificate programs; former students stated that this training is valuable for employment. It was also felt that, along with skill development, there was a need for knowledge in setting priorities and handling realistic situations. This study indicated that all groups indicated that graduates were especially well prepared in the behavior/attitudes of: attendance, punctuality, common sense in working, poise, emotional stability, grooming, compatibility with coworkers, courtesy and pleasantness in manner, enthusiasm, interest in working, cooperation with fellow workers, dependability in performing duties, and acceptance of responsibility.

Snodgrass (1979) obtained data from the Institute for Certifying Secretaries in Kansas City, Missouri. Information was obtained from applications of secretaries with verified work experience. The study was done to determine the relationship of selected educational background and work experience factors to success of new candidates on the 1978 Certified Professional Secretary Exam. A significant relationship was found between the work experience and the scores in communications and decision-making skills.

O'neil (1978) surveyed, by telephone, 20% of the counties

in Illinois to identify and compare a variety of occupational survival skills most appropriate for workers to successfully maintain their chosen occupations. It was concluded that personal traits appear to be just as important to blue collar workers as to white collar. This study rated the following as important for all workers: dependability, getting along with people with all variety of personalities, working as a team member, knowing your own abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, being loyal to your organization, making independent decisions, using initiative and imagination, knowing what's expected of you, working without close supervision, working under tension/pressure, adjusting to various work situations, and managing time and materials efficiently.

Benson (1983) stated that the business and management programs office of the University of Wyoming conducted a study on why business school graduates cannot find satisfactory jobs. It was stated, "As many as 50 to 70% of business school graduates change employment on a voluntary or involuntary basis, within three years after they start their first post-graduation jobs" (Benson, 1983, p. 61). The results of the survey questionnaire, sent to the largest employers in the area, showed that energy level/enthusiasm and persistence/determination and poise were rated very highly as desirable traits.

Flately (1980) stated that "Research on changing the maturity of career attitudes, which are demonstrably related

to success in training and in work, has shown that counseling and didactic treatments can increase the maturity of career attitudes and presumably, therefore, enchancing the success which training and work tasks can be accomplished" (p.35). In Flately's study to determine whether an office education teacher/coordinator's effectiveness was associated with the teacher's level of interpersonal relation skills, it was found human relations training for teacher/coordinators does not seem to have significantly improved the performance of the office education students. Therefore, even though education needs to provide the student with an environment where learning and personal growth take place, the level of teacher/coordinator interpersonal relation skills will not necessarily have a positive effect.

Weissberg, Berentsen, Cote, Cravey, and Heath (1982) did a study to access the academic, career, and personal needs of undergraduate students at the University of Georgia. Their research indicated the top ten in the personal needs area:

speaking before groups
increasing self-confidence
handling stress and anxiety
feeling more comfortable meeting new people
learning leadership and decision-making skills
accepting criticism without being upset

In 1975, Pitko conducted a study to ascertain whether significant differences in attitudes held by office education students are associated with the type of office education program students are involved in. The Attitudes Toward Office

Employment Scale was used on students of office education enrolled in Kansas high schools during 1970-71. The findings of this study showed that: 1) office students in cooperative programs hold attitudes toward office employment which are not significantly different from attitudes held by students in office practice classes; 2) students in office practice classes and cooperative programs do not differ in attitudes or opinions toward office employment; 3) students in cooperative programs did not attain the attitudes which are significantly different from attitudes of students in office practice classes who do not have work experience (Pitko, 1975, pp. 27-28).

Helliwell (1982) compared high school cooperative students to those students not involved in cooperative education programs on several work-associated variables, specifically the meaning of work and the value of work, as they relate to overall work attitudes. The following terms were defined as: the meaning of work refers to the attitudes or impressions held by students toward work; the value of work is a preference variable reflecting the goal of need satisfaction a student seeks from work and can be either extrinsic or intrinsic. Helliwell defined these terms as:

> Extrinsic work values are factors related to the benefits derived from the context of work, rather than from work itself, for example, salary, supervision, co-worker relationships, and working conditions. Intrinsic work values are factors related to the benefit derived from the content of

> the work, for example the nature of the job, responsibility, recognition, and achievement. The more intrinsic the work value orientation, the more job satisfaction exists, which may result in more job productivity and psychological growth (Helliwell, 1982, p. 75).

This study found that cooperative education students: 1) had a broader understanding of the meaning of work, 2) understood the nature of work and the working environment better than the academic students, 3) had a more intrinsic work value orientation, 4) understood the importance of actual work itself, 5) derived satisfaction through recognition, responsibility, and achievement on the job rather than from the rewards of the job in the working environment, and 6) had a more positive overall work attitude than academic students.

Goodwill (1979) conducted a study to determine if a simulation in word processing was an effective method of instruction to achieve differences in student behavior relating to interpersonal relations, attitude toward work, and knowledge of word processing principles and concepts. The population for this study consisted of two classes of office procedures--the simulation and non-simulation group. Pretests and post tests both using the Office Work Checklist, to examine attitude toward work, and the Survey of Interpersonal Values, to examine interpersonal relations values, were given to the students. The conclusions of this study were that the student participation in the office simulation was not able to achieve differences in student attitudes and values as

compared to the more structured classroom. Goodwill stated that the students in both groups held similar attitudes at the beginning of the study and similar attitudes at the end of the study.

In 1980, Gehris's study attempted to determine the extent to which selected factors can predict the work attitudes of beginning office employees. This study was based on nine attitude factors: 1) employer-employee relationships, 2) working conditions, 3) employee aspirations, 4) employee responsibility, 5) employee welfare, 6) ethical relationships, 7) employee social sensitivity, 8) employee-employer relationships, and 9) initiative. The conclusions from this study were that there generally exists significant relationships between the participation of former business education students in office simulations and their work attitudes as beginning office employees. However, it was found that a significant relationship generally does not exist between the participation of former business education students in cooperative office education programs and their work attitudes as beginning office employees. Gehris stated, at the conclusion of this research, that it has always been assumed that cooperative office education programs can partially be justified for inclusion into curriculums by the positive effect that they have on students' attitudes toward work; this study found this assumption may not be correct.

Vice (1981) reported that the findings of a Carnegie

Foundation study, cited by Strohbehn in 1969, indicated that the majority of office workers (85%) lose their jobs because they cannot get along with people. Therefore, it is important for people to be able to get along together, and the importance of the effect of interpersonal relationships within the office cannot be stressed too much. This study agrees with the research, which has been stated in this presentation.

CONCLUSION

The knowledge and correct application of skills is, naturally, vital for the secretarial student as a prospective employee. However, the importance of attitudes is equally as important. The studies have not clearly indicated whether the cooperative education program will have a positive affect on the attitudes of the students involved in them. More research needs to be done to prove or disprove this relationship.

INTRODUCTION

It has been stated that "business and industry would like nothing better than to be guaranteed competent, enthusiastic, and dependable employees who are able to be promoted within their firms at the appropriate time" (Zernik, 1983, pp. 181-182). Because of this need, vocational educators have formed partnerships with business and industry. There have been rapid advances in technology, which has made this close association even more important than ever. In one executive's words, "a tremendous effort on the part of the educational community and a major commitment on the part of business and industry" (Rich, 1983, p. 32). "To develop competent workers in the vocational area of distributive education, it have become apparent that cooperative vocational education (CVE) is a very important integral part of that program" (Briggs, 1980, p. 25).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The House of Representatives, in 1976, gave the following definition to cooperative education:

> The term cooperative education means a program of vocational education for persons who, through written cooperative arrangements between the school and employers, receive instruction, including required academic courses and related vocational instruction, by alternation of study in school with a job in any occupational field, but those two experiences must be planned and supervised by the school and employers so that each contributes to the student's education and to his or her employability (Sitt, 1983, p. 85).

Many students entering this work experience have apprehensive feelings about their abilities to function in this "real life" job situation. They see life as two separate worlds of classroom and office, and the feel inadequate about meeting the adults they will be working with and meeting the standards of business and industry. The classroom is needed to reinforce theory and application so that the student, involved in the work experience, will feel competent about their performance and interpersonal relations skills. Baumgardiner (1981) stated that the student should be encouraged to improve performance, establish and maintain satisfying personal relationships, and develop positive attitudes toward the job. Many educators believe that there is no other learning experience as vital as the cooperative work experience program as a motivating factor for students to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. It introduces students to the problems of human adjustment and allows students to develop positive on-the-job attitudes and personality characteristics. Kingston (1978) stated that a resource guide for New Jersey cooperative education coordinators has identified the following objectives:

1. make the student understand the importance of being able to follow direction and accept supervision,
2. promote feelings of self respect and achievement in students,
3. provide the opportunities to develop leadership qualities, civic responsibilities and social intelligence,

4. provide an opportunity for students to make social adjustments and to develop the ability to work with coworkers and supervisors (Kingston, 1978, p. 257).

Otero Junior College, LaJunta, Colorado, has stated very similar objectives for their office simulation program problem-solving situations:

1. develop tact and still accomplish whatever must be accomplished,
2. be objective regarding work and interpersonal relationships,
3. accept failure and success gracefully,
4. accept their individual shortcomings and assets and to work with them,
5. work effectively with fellow employees and with supervisors, and
6. develop screening techniques (Curlott, 1979, p. 93).

Reese (1983) said that we must provide opportunities for students to work cooperatively as a team member in order to make decisions and share responsibility for completing tasks; advancement is excellent for workers who have good interpersonal skills. The importance of these attitude skills has been stressed in goals and objectives of many institutions, and it is felt that they are a vital consideration when developing such a program.

Snyder (1982) advised that the study of acceptable work attitudes needs to be a unit in office/secretarial education. Attitude determines success more than aptitude. "Behavior traits such as: aggressiveness, assertiveness, cooperation, dependability, enthusiasm, friendliness, optimism, organization,

patience, and tactfulness can have a strong impact on the success or failure on a potential employee" (Cockran, 1983, p. 143). Today's employer wants more from their employees than just skills; they are looking for employees who have the ability to grow and advance with the company. Therefore, if a student is to compete in today's job market, he/she must develop positive attitudes. It has been suggested that an emphasis should be included on attitude improvement in secretarial/office procedures. Several areas for improvement in attitudes have been given:

> Meeting deadlines--develop the attitude that a job must be completed on time even if it means working on his/her own time.
>
> Managing time--many students need assistance in establishing priorities.
>
> Assuming responsibility for use and care of equipment--each student must develop an attitude of responsibility for using and caring for equipment.
>
> Develop respect--displaying an attitude of respect means more than just being courteous; it also means being willing to dress, act, and perform the job according to the standards of that business. It is an attitude of thoughtfulness and concern for fellow employees.
>
> Establishing a sense of commitment--this implies interest and pride in a job well done. Students should not only be interested in the job but also to complete it to the best of their abilities (Russell, 1983, p. 19).

CONCLUSION

The secretarial internship program, a form of cooperative education, offers the community college an opportunity to

give students a valuable experience in attitude development that cannot be duplicated in the classroom. Because of this close association of business, industry, and the classroom, the student will feel more comfortable in seeking assistance for support in attitude development and related goal achievement. From this review of research and literature, it has become apparent that the cooperative work study program is a vital part of vocational education. It can provide the means for developing student attitude characteristics necessary for today's successful employee. More research is necessary, however, to further study the relationship between cooperative education and positive attitude development.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology for this study for the purpose of determining if there is an improvement in attitude of students involved in cooperative education programs.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A survey questionnaire was distributed by mail and in class to collect data from Secretarial Science students from Herkimer County Community College. This data was the result of questions asked of these students in areas of attitudes about work. The data was used to ascertain if there is an improvement in attitudes after these students have completed a forty-hour work study program. The questionnaire was given to students who have not begun the cooperative education program (June, 1984 graduates), and it was mailed to all 1982 and 1983 graduates of this program who completed this work study experience as part of their curriculum requirements.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A questionnaire was developed using the Likert technique for the construction of attitude measuring instruments. On a Likert scale, respondents react to items by means of the following five-category rating system: Always, quite often, sometimes, seldom, and never. In addition, the catagory of

not applicable was included for student use whenever necessary. The following categories of questions were used in this survey:

1. Employer-Employee Relationships
2. Working Conditions
3. Employee Aspirations
4. Employee Responsibility
5. Employee Welfare
6. Ethical Relationships
7. Employee Social Sensitivity
8. Employee Interpersonal Relationships
9. Initiative

These questions are an adaptation of an instrument developed by Gehris (1980) entitled "Employee Work Attitude Evaluation Form." These questions were used to form the basis for variable selection, and consequently, the design of the survey instrument.

VARIABLES

The variables for the study were designed to ascertain the following and relate to each listed question:

1. The type of working relationship with the employer (Questions #1-a,b,c,d)
2. The working conditions (Questions #2-a,b,c)
3. Satisfaction with the area of interest of the student (Medical, Legal, Executive, Medical Office Assistant, Word Processing) (Questions #3-a,b,c)

4. Willingness to accept responsibility (Questions #4-a,b,c,d,e)

5. Interpersonal relationship skills (Questions #5-a,b,c & #8-a,b,c,d,e)

6. Traits of honesty, sensitivity, and initiative (Questions #6-a,b,c & #7-a,b & #9-a,b,c,d)

7. Expectations for future employment (Questions #3-a,b,c)

ASSUMPTIONS

1. The Students surveyed were a fair representative of students involved in cooperative education programs.

2. The responses were valid and reliable.

3. The results of the study should have a determination on whether this cooperative education program will be continued on the two-year community college level.

LIMITATIONS

1. The population sample consisted only of people in entry-level positions.

2. There are rapid changes developing in business technology which may reflect an additional change as time goes on.

3. The people surveyed are/were involved in different emphases in the same curriculum, and this may bias their attitudinal development.

POPULATION

The population consisted of Secretarial Science degree and certificate majors. These students were selected from 1982 and 1983 graduates and candidates for 1984 graduation at Herkimer County Community College.

PROCEDURES

The survey instrument was designed to evaluate attitude change in secretarial science students who participate in

cooperative education. Each one of the students in the selected population was surveyed, and a return of at least 60% resulted. The questionnaire was designed and validated using a jury panel of three.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The data was analyzed using hypotheses testing. Descriptive statistics were used with a significance of .05 expected.

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the results of the data collected after it was satisfactorily treated with hypotheses testing. A two-sample, one-tailed T-test was used with a significance of .05, which means that 5 times out of 100 may be attributed to chance. A survey was given to a "before group," which consisted of Herkimer County Community College Secretarial Science curriculum students who were potential June, 1984 graduates. This was the group which did not complete the 40-hour work study internship program. The survey was also sent out to an "after group," which consisted of 1982 and 1983 Herkimer County Community College Secretarial Science graduates who did complete this internship program. The total number of responses received was 61--26 from the before group and 35 from the after group. The findings of this survey are shown in Table A on the following pages. Listed will be the variables, the mean--before and after, the standard deviation--before and after, and the T-score. A T-score of 1.64 or better was considered an improvement in attitude on this study to determine whether there is an improvement in attitude in students involved in cooperative education programs. A T-score of 2.32 was considered a strongly significant attitudinal improvement, and a mean of over 4 was considered already high. There were nine

different categories of variables listed on the survey form. These were: 1) Employer-Employee Relationships, 2) Working Conditions, 3) Employee Aspirations, 4) Employee Responsibility, 5) Employee Welfare, 6) Ethical Relationships, 7) Employee Social Sensitivity, 8) Employee Interpersonal Relationships, and 9) Initiative. Under these categories of variables were listed 32 specific factors to be rated by each respondent. The Work Study Evaluation Form with the Sample Cover Letter are shown in the appendix to this study.

TABLE A--FINDINGS

VARIABLE	Mean of BEFORE	Mean of AFTER	ST DEV BEFORE	ST DEV AFTER	T-SCORE
1. You get along with supervisors	4.30	4.60	.54	.55	2.05
2. You work well with supervisors regardless of their personalities	3.80	4.52	.80	.61	3.81
3. You work well with supervisors regardless of their ages	4.26	4.73	.77	.44	2.73
4. You accept constructive criticism from supervisors	3.73	4.28	.66	.66	3.21
5. You are willing to work overtime, if asked	4.30	4.23	.88	1.00	.33
6. You are willing to perform less than desirable tasks	3.65	4.20	.93	.94	2.25
7. You leave the work station in a neat condition	4.61	4.82	.57	.15	1.57
8. You have aspirations to achieve a higher level in your same area of interest in the future	4.34	4.63	.89	.69	1.36

* ST DEV = Standard Deviation

TABLE A--FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

VARIABLE	Mean of BEFORE	Mean of AFTER	ST DEV BEFORE	ST DEV AFTER	T-SCORE
9. You would participate in in-service training or education to qualify for a promotion	4.65	4.85	.68	.35	1.34
10. You contemplate a change to another position in a completely different secretarial emphasis	2.60	3.31	1.15	1.39	2.05
11. You can be depended on to follow a job through to its completion	4.57	4.88	.50	.32	2.74
12. You can be trusted	4.88	4.97	.32	.16	1.24
13. You can make decisions on your own	3.92	4.37	.62	.59	2.81
14. You maintain a good attendance/tardy record	4.50	4.82	.64	.38	2.30
15. You dress properly	4.61	4.91	.57	.28	2.45
16. You are concerned about the welfare of other employees	3.80	4.40	.64	.65	3.54
17. You avoid a "self-centered" attitude	4.07	4.48	.62	.74	2.33

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TABLE A--FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

VARIABLE	Mean of BEFORE	Mean of AFTER	ST DEV BEFORE	ST DEV AFTER	T-SCORE
18. You respect the rights of other employees	4.53	4.48	.58	.74	.31
19. You are honest	4.61	4.91	.63	.28	2.23
20. You are tactful	3.76	4.68	.58	.47	6.55
21. You believe that it is not proper to tell the supervisor of another employee's weaknesses	3.42	3.94	.94	1.11	1.91
22. You believe that the most qualified person should get the job regardless of race, religion, sex, etc.	4.69	4.94	.83	.23	1.48
23. You feel that a strike may not be the best or only method for an office staff to use to get what is wanted	3.69	4.12	.73	.88	2.03
24. You get along with fellow employees	4.15	4.48	.54	.50	2.43
25. You believe competition among workers is desirable	3.03	3.30	.77	.98	1.16

TABLE A--FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

VARIABLE	Mean of BEFORE	Mean of AFTER	ST DEV BEFORE	ST DEV AFTER	T-SCORE
26. You accept inexperienced workers	3.52	4.24	.77	.70	3.66
27. You are willing to work smoothly with and for others	4.38	4.68	.57	.47	2.19
28. You accept constructive criticism from fellow employees	3.19	4.17	.80	.66	5.07
29. You go ahead with a task without being told to do so	3.76	4.41	.76	.70	3.34
30. You make suggestions for improvements	3.46	3.94	.98	.96	1.90
31. You "pitch-in" when needed	4.23	4.71	.58	.45	3.48
32. You try to improve your work skills	4.53	4.77	.58	.42	1.73

RESULTS

The results of the findings of this study indicate the following:

1. There seems to be an improvement in the attitude "getting along with supervisors"
2. There seems to be a significant improvement in the attitude "working well with supervisors regardless of their personalities"
3. There seems to be a significant improvement in the attitude "working well with supervisors regardless of their ages"
4. There seems to be a significant improvement in the attitude "accepting constructive criticism from supervisors"
5. There does not seem to be an improvement in the attitude "willingness to work overtime if asked"
6. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude "willingness to perform less than desirable tasks"
7. There does not seem to be an improvement in the attitude "leaving the work station in a neat condition"
8. There does not seem to be an improvement in the attitude "having aspirations to achieve a higher level in your same area of interest in the future"
9. There does not seem to be an improvement in the attitude "willingness to participate in in-service training or education to qualify for a promotion"
10. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude "contemplating a change to another position in a completely different secretarial emphasis"
11. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "dependable to follow a job through to its completion"
12. There does not seem to be an improvement in the attitude "can be trusted"
13. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "making decisions on your own"

14. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude "maintaining a good attendance/tardy record"

15. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "dressing properly"

16. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "being concerned about the welfare of other employees"

17. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "avoid being self-centered"

18. There does not seem to be an improvement in the attitude "respecting the rights of other employees"

19. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude of "honesty"

20. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude of "tactfulness"

21. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude "believing that it is not proper to tell the supervisor of another employee's weaknesses"

22. There does not seem to be an improvement in the attitude "believing that the most qualified person should get the job regardless of race, religion, sex, etc."

23. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude "feeling that a strike may not be the best or only method for an office staff to use to get what is wanted"

24. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "getting along with fellow employees"

25. There does not seem to be an improvement in the attitude "believing competition among workers is desirable"

26. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "accepting inexperience workers"

27. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude "willingness to work smoothly with and for others"

28. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "accepting constructive criticism from fellow employees"

29. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "going ahead with a task without being told to do so"

30. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude "making suggestions for improvements"

31. There does seem to be a significant improvement in the attitude "willingness to pitch-in when needed"

32. There does seem to be an improvement in the attitude "trying to improve your work skills"

INTERPRETATION

The findings of this study appear to indicate that there has been an improvement in twenty-four of the thirty-two variables listed on the survey. Two of the variables indicated a highly-significant improvement in attitude. These were the variables of "you are tactful" and "you accept constructive criticism from fellow employees." There were also many that appeared to show a significant improvement along with those that showed an improvement.

After reviewing the results of the data collected, it seems that of the eight variables, which did not show an improvement, seven of these already appeared to have a high before and after mean. The statistics indicate that there was quite a positive attitude in this area with students prior to completing the work study experience. Taking this into account along with the statistical method used, a high T-score, which indicates degree of significance, would be a statistical impossibility in many of the cases.

There does not seem to be any one specific category where attitude has not showed an improvement. The overall results appear to strongly support the hypothesis "There is an improvement in attitude in students involved in cooperative education programs."

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The cooperative education program may provide a learning experience where occupational skills are provided; however, it has never been clear just what type of attitudinal improvement is gained by student involvement in these programs. This study was proposed, therefore, to try to gain valuable insight into this area where further research has been needed. The population selected was Secretarial Science majors at Herkimer County Community College. A group, consisting of June, 1984 degree candidates, was surveyed before they began the forty-hour work study program. Another group, consisting of 1982 and 1983 graduates of this curriculum, was also surveyed, and this was considered the after group because they had already completed the work study experience. A Work Study Evaluation Form was developed and used to collect responses from these two groups. This data was then statistically analyzed using hypotheses testing.

CONCLUSIONS

This study and its finding were strongly significant both statistically and educationally. The findings clearly indicated that there had been an improvement in attitudes in these students who had participated in the work study experience. This amounts to the rejection of the null

hypothesis, thereby, supporting the belief that there is an improvement in attitudes in students involved in cooperative education programs. The statistical findings appeared to give strong evidence that attitudinal improvement took place in a large majority of the variables listed. It is clear, after reviewing this statistical material, that the hypotheses testing and the analysis of the results were clearly significant and supported the need for further research in this area of attitudinal improvement.

The study was also educationally significant. It has been believed that attitude can have a strong effect on success or failure in the business world. Educators have felt that by providing a work study experience in cooperation with an involved business world, they were giving students the opportunity for further skill development along with providing them with an atmosphere where attitudinal improvement would also take place. It seems likely, from the results of this study, that educators are being successful with the attitudinal objectives of these programs. The study indicated that the work study experience is definitely a worthwhile opportunity to achieve important positive behavior/attitudinal characteristics. The overall goal of effectiveness in the educational process seems to be met with programs of this type.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Further research in this area could also prove to be

very valuable. Another study should be undertaken to test whether there is a difference in the positive attitudinal development in students involved in different emphases in the Secretarial Science Program. Students in the areas of Medical, Legal, Executive, Word Processing, Medical Office Assistants, and one-year Certificate students should be statistically evaluated to try to determine whether there is a difference in relation to student involvement in specialized coursework.

It could also prove to be very valuable to conduct a study of this type using the same before and after group. Because of the time frame of this study, it was not possible to wait until the same "before" group completed the internship program and could be surveyed again as the "after" group. A statistical analysis of data collected from a study of this type may also prove to be very significant.

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HERKIMER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
HERKIMER, NEW YORK 13350-9987
(315) 866-0300

February 8, 1984

Dear Secretarial Science Graduate

This letter contains an extremely important request; you are asked to become a part of a Master's research study at SUNY Oswego. The study is designed to determine whether there is an improvement in attitudes in students involved in cooperative education programs.

Since you are a graduate of this college and have completed the forty-hour work study program for all Secretarial Science students, your cooperation in completing this questionnaire will be of great value. It is very important that this form be completed and returned promptly in the postage-paid envelope, which I have enclosed. I would like to provide you with certain assurances: neither the names of the individuals, nor the name of your firm will be mentioned in the written study. The information you will provide will not be given to any other person, business firm, or organization.

I hope that you recognize the value of this research. By cooperating, you will become an integral part of an effort designed to improve the quality of future Secretarial Science programs offered at this college. Please return this survey to me by February 22, 1984; also, if you would like any information regarding the determination of this study, please contact me after June, 1984.

Sincerely

Donna M. Testa

Donna M. Testa, Instructor
Business Division

dm
Enclosure

WORK STUDY EVALUATION FORM

NAME: _____

YEAR GRADUATED: _____

CURRICULUM EMPHASES: _____
(Executive, Medical, Legal, Certificate, Medical Office Assistant, Word Processing)

CURRENT EMPLOYER: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: For each factor below, please read the considerations and rate yourself on the following factors: Always, Quite Often, Sometimes, Seldom, or Never. Circle the number in the appropriate column. If you feel you are unable to rate yourself in one or more of the considerations, circle the "NA" for Not Applicable.

	ALWAYS	QUITE OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1. Employer-Employee Relationships						
A. you get along with supervisors	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you work well with supervisors regardless of their personalities	5	4	3	2	1	NA
C. you work well with supervisors regardless of their ages	5	4	3	2	1	NA
D. you accept constructive criticism from supervisors	5	4	3	2	1	NA
2. Working Conditions						
A. you are willing to work overtime, if asked	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you are willing to perform less than desirable tasks	5	4	3	2	1	NA
C. you leave the work station in a neat condition	5	4	3	2	1	NA
3. Employee Aspirations						
A. you have aspirations to achieve a higher level in your same area of interest in the future	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you would participate in in-service training or education to qualify for a promotion	5	4	3	2	1	NA
C. you contemplate a change to another position in a completely different secretarial emphasis	5	4	3	2	1	NA

	ALWAYS	QUITE OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
4. Employee Responsibility						
A. you can be depended on to follow a job through to its completion	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you can be trusted	5	4	3	2	1	NA
C. you can make decision on your own	5	4	3	2	1	NA
D. you maintain a good attendance/tardy record	5	4	3	2	1	NA
E. you dress properly	5	4	3	2	1	NA
5. Employee Welfare						
A. you are concerned about the welfare of other employees	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you avoid a "self-centered" attitude	5	4	3	2	1	NA
C. you respect the rights of other employees	5	4	3	2	1	NA
6. Ethical Relationships						
A. you are honest	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you are tactful	5	4	3	2	1	NA
C. you believe that it is not proper to tell the supervisor of another employee's weaknesses	5	4	3	2	1	NA
7. Employee Social Sensitivity						
A. you believe that the most qualified person should get the job regardless of race, religion, sex, etc.	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you feel that a strike may not be the best or only method for an office staff to use to get what is wanted	5	4	3	2	1	NA
8. Employee Interpersonal Relationships						
A. you get along with fellow employees	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you believe competition among workers is desirable	5	4	3	2	1	NA
C. you accept inexperienced workers	5	4	3	2	1	NA
D. you are willing to work smoothly with and for others	5	4	3	2	1	NA
E. you accept constructive criticism from fellow employees	5	4	3	2	1	NA

CONTINUED

	ALWAYS	QUITE OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
9. Initiative						
A. you go ahead with a task without being told to do so	5	4	3	2	1	NA
B. you make suggestions for improvements	5	4	3	2	1	NA
C. you "pitch-in" when needed	5	4	3	2	1	NA
D. you try to improve your work skills	5	4	3	2	1	NA

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